

MAIN STREET VACAVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT



THE REPORT OF THE CITY OF VACAVILLE
HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW COMMITTEE, MARCH 1983

CITY OF VACAVILLE
HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW COMMITTEE

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Vacaville Historic District Review Committee was appointed by the City Council to review the potential of an historic district in the Main Street area. The Committee has spent five months developing a proposed historic district. The district is intended to serve as a catalyst to encourage economic revitalization of the area.

This report presents the Committee's work for public review and includes the following information:

- PART I An Overview of Main Street
- PART II Explanation of the Historic District Proposal
- PART III Proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance
- PART IV Proposed Design Criteria
- APPENDIX A. Vacaville General Plan Policy regarding
 the Central Business District
- B. Excerpts from the Commercial Development
 Action Plan
- C. Summary of Tax Benefits for Historic
 Building Rehabilitation

PART I

AN OVERVIEW OF MAIN STREET

What it was, what it is
and what it can be

Vacaville began as a tiny farming community in the 1850's. Main Street was laid out along Ulatis Creek. Little development occurred until the 1880's when the rapid expansion of the fruit growing industry ushered in an age of prosperity. Along Main Street, speculators, merchants and civic organizations began to erect large, masonry buildings that exhibited the architectural flair of the Victorian era. Monumental structures such as the IOOF Hall and the Triangle Building, both built in 1896, began to define Main Street as the cultural and commercial heart of Vacaville.

The boom continued past the turn of the century and Main Street continued to grow. Major civic buildings, the City Hall in 1907 and the Carnegie Library in 1914, were built at opposite ends of the commercial area. Main Street was the center of activity for the growing community. The entire Main Street strip filled in with substantial commercial buildings. The prosperity continued through the 1920's as the Bank of Italy (1920) and Clark Theater (1929) became landmarks. Soon, however, other areas captured the fruit market, the depression set in and the pace of growth slowed.

Through the 1930's, 40's and into the 50's Vacaville remained a small town focused on Main Street. Then, the suburban growth era began. Through the 1950's and 70's Vacaville exploded with new residences. To service this new population, new commercial areas developed near Main Street, out Merchant Street and along Monte Vista Avenue. Finally, the shopping centers came and a substantial portion of the commercial activity left Main Street.

Efforts were made to revive Main Street with mixed results. An early 1960's urban renewal project was rejected by the community and the old buildings remained. A parking district was formed and several public parking lots were created. One way streets, traffic signals and street widening on the periphery of the downtown improved access. The central business district in general prospered but Main Street did not share in much of the success.

Today Main Street has it's problems: a high business turnover rate, a high vacancy rate, some problem uses and many substandard buildings. On the bright side, however, there are a number of strong and established businesses (such as the newspaper and furniture stores) that have chosen to remain. In recent years several new specialty retail and service businesses have joined the Main Street community. New projects like the community theater and the Reporter's flag memorial give promise for the future.

In 1980 the community adopted a new General Plan that proposed to reestablish the central business district (CBD) as the economic, cultural and social core of the City (the relevant text of the General Plan is included in the appendix of this report). The

General Plan proposed several positive steps to help that rejuvenation occur: Perimeter street improvements, landscaping and aesthetic improvements and a closer tie in to the Andrews Park area. The General Plan was just a start.

In 1981 the City and the Vacaville Local Development Corporation commissioned a market analysis of the City's commercial potential by the well respected economic research firm of Williams-Kuebelbeck Associates. Their report became the Vacaville Commercial Development Action Plan. The analysis demonstrated that the CBD area had a substantial potential for growth in the financial, office, specialty retail and restaurant areas. The report additionally noted that with the proper attractions, the the major market from Interstate 80 (60,000 cars per day) could be tapped.

They specifically noted the strong potential of the Main Street area if an "old town" or historic district theme could be established. The Action Plan spurred the formation of a Central Business District Committee of the Chamber of Commerce. That Committee and the Chamber Board reviewed the recommendations of the Action Plan and in turn requested that the City Council establish a committee of local business and property owners to investigate the historic district concept. A copy of the relevant sections from the Commercial Development Action Plan is included in the Appendix of this report.

During the same time period the City adopted the Vacaville Community Redevelopment Plan. That plan included the Main Street area and can provide financing for parking and street improvements and also private renovation of historic buildings in the area. The City has also began to actively seek federal and state funding sources for downtown improvements. Most recently, the City and the Chamber of Commerce have initiated the development of a Master Plan for the CBD area to determine priorities and specifications for rehabilitation of the area.

PART II

EXPLANATION OF THE
HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPOSAL

The Historic District Review Committee has developed what it considers to be a tool to help achieve the renovation of the Main Street area. The idea is not original but it has worked successfully in other communities in California such as Pasadena, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and Sacramento.

The proposed historic district is an "overlay" zoning district that would identify the Main Street area as having historic features that warrant special treatment. The district would establish design criteria for the area that encourage the rehabilitation of buildings in the architectural styles of the 1890 to 1940 period. A property owner is not required to make any changes. The business decision to improve a property is left to the owner. The historic district would only give direction as to how the exterior of the building could be improved. Restoration of a building to its exact former appearance is not required.

Like any proposal, there are tradeoffs involved, the historic district would mean that the City's existing design review of exterior building alterations would become more specific. The trade off for this increased review are the following advantages:

1. Tax Incentives - The 1978 and 1981 tax laws provided substantial incentives for property owners or investors who rehabilitated older commercial buildings. These incentives can be maximized for buildings within the historic districts. A maximum tax credit of 25 percent is allowed for expenses incurred in rehabilitating a certified historic building. The proposed historic district would unlock the door to these maximum tax benefits. An explanation of the tax provisions is included in the appendix of this report.
2. Historic Building Code - With the establishment of an historic district the City can utilize the State Historic Building Code. This special code allows alternatives to the Uniform Building Code that can offer reduced costs in the rehabilitation of old buildings.
3. Establishment of a Design and Marketing Theme - Through the implementation of an historic district a design theme or image can be created for the Main Street area. This "old town" theme has proven to be a very effective marketing device and an attractor of customers. People seem to feel very comfortable with the scale and atmosphere of Victorian era buildings if the area appears well kept and modernized. The theme has worked well in many communities.

4. The Preservation of Main Street in an Economically Viable Way - Many people have a basic affinity for the old buildings of Main Street. They are an important part of Vacaville and the Community could be less without them. The hard fact, however, is that few of us can afford to support monuments without economic return. A historic district can permit old buildings to be preserved in a way that makes economic sense. Typically a good historic district results in higher property values, greater attractiveness to investors and increased retail sales.

In order to implement an historic district in the Main Street area, the Committee has developed two documents: The first is an Historic Preservation Ordinance which would be a law adopted by the City Council as part of the Zoning Ordinance. It would set up a process to designate historic areas and would establish the "Main Street Vacaville Historic District". The draft ordinance is adapted from those of several other Cities, but is specifically tailored to Vacaville. The district would not in any way effect the uses permitted within buildings and is designed to fit right in to the City's existing design review process. The Historic Designation Ordinance would set up the legal framework for the historic district.

The second document is a set of design criteria. The criteria would serve as a guide to property owners who decide to rehabilitate the exterior of their buildings. Unlike the Ordinance, they are not written in precise legal terms but are written in more flexible design terms. They have been reviewed with local architects to insure that they are reasonable and understandable. Again, the basic provisions were adopted from historic districts in other cities who have similar types of buildings. The Criteria provide direction that relate to all elements of the exterior of a building.

The Historic District Review Committee has recommended the adoption of this historic district as a way to encourage the revitalization of the Main Street area. The area of the proposed district runs along Main Street from the Old City Hall to the Old Library at Parker Street. The area is compact and contains almost all of the older commercial buildings in the downtown area.

Following public information meetings, the proposal will be considered by the City Planning Commission and the City Council at public hearings. Comments and ideas from property owners will be welcomed throughout this process.

PART III

PROPOSED HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

The following draft ordinance has been developed by the Historic District Review Committee for consideration by the Community. Because it would become part of the City's Municipal Code, the language is intended to be precise and specific. The Ordinance would establish the necessary legal framework for the City's designation of historic district areas.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Section I. Chapter 17.65 is hereby added to read as follows:

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

17.65.010 Purpose. In order to implement the policies of the Vacaville General Plan relative to historic buildings and areas, the provisions of this Chapter have been established. The City Council hereby finds that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of structures and districts of historic, architectural, and engineering significance located within the city to be of cultural and aesthetic benefit to the community. It is further found that respect of the heritage of the city will enhance the economic, cultural, and aesthetic standing of the city. The purpose of this Chapter is to promote the general welfare of the community through:

- A. The protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of structures that represent past eras, events, and persons important in history, or which provide significant examples of architectural styles of the past or are landmarks in the history of architecture, or which are unique and irreplaceable assets to the city and its neighborhoods, or which provide for this, and future generations, examples of the past generations lived;
- B. The development and maintenance of complementary settings and environment for such structures and/or districts;
- C. The enhancement of property values; the stabilization of neighborhoods and areas of the city; the increase of economic and financial benefits to the city, its property owners, and its inhabitants; and the promotion of visitor trade and interest;
- D. The preservation and encouragement of a city of varied architectural styles, reflecting the cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural phases of its history;
- E. The educational and cultural enrichment of this and future generations by fostering knowledge of our heritage;
- F. The promotion and encouragement of continued private ownership and utilization of such structures so the objectives listed above can be attained under this Chapter.

A further purpose of this Chapter is to encourage property owners to rehabilitate historic buildings in a manner consistent with the standards herein established. This Chapter does not require a property owner to undertake the historic rehabilitation of a building, but only establishes design parameters for such modifications. The decision to improve or modify a property is left to the property owner's discretion. Rehabilitation is intended to refer to the alteration of historic buildings to enhance their historically significant architectural features and does not require the restoration of buildings to their exact former appearance.

17.65.020 Definitions. Unless a different meaning is clearly indicated from context, the following terms shall have the following meanings when used in this Chapter:

- A. "Alteration" shall mean any exterior change or modification, through public or private action, of any property located within a designated historic district, or a designated historical building including exterior changes to or modification of structure, architectural details or visual characteristics such as paint color and surface texture, grading, surface paving, new structures, removal of trees and other natural features, disturbance of archeological sites or areas, and the placement or removal of any exterior objects such as signs, plaques, light fixtures, street furniture, walls, fences, steps, plantings and landscape accessories affecting the exterior visual qualities of the property.
- B. "Contributing Building" shall mean a structure within a historic district which retains scale, mass and other architectural characteristics to the degree that it contributes to the sense of time and place of the immediate area and the district. The building may have individual architectural significance or may be one of a grouping of background buildings that jointly contribute to the character of the immediate area and the district. Contributing buildings may reflect interim modifications if those modifications do not irreparably detract

from the character of the building or if the modifications reflect an architectural style or particular era important to the development of the city. Contributing buildings shall also include structures that have strong historical ties to activities, events or individuals important in the development of the city.

- C. "Designated Historic Building" shall mean any improvement that has special historical, cultural, aesthetic, or architectural character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or history of the city, the State of California, or the nation and that has been designated pursuant to the provisions of this Chapter.
- D. "Exterior Architectural Feature" shall mean the architectural elements embodying style, design, general arrangement and components of all of the outer surfaces of an improvement: the kind, color, and texture of the building materials and the type and style of all windows, doors, lights, signs, and other fixtures appurtenant to such improvement.
- E. "Historic District" shall mean any area containing improvements which have a special character, historic interest, or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles typical to the history of the city, and which improvements constitute a distinct section of the city that has been designated an historic district pursuant to the Chapter.
- F. "Improvement" shall mean any building, structure, place, parking facility, fence, gate, wall, work of art, or other object constituting a physical betterment of real property, or any part of such betterment.
- G. "Noncontributing Building" shall mean a structure within a historic district that in its present condition does not contribute to the sense of time and place of the immediate area and the district. Noncontributing building may include those buildings constructed after the time period featured in a historic district or buildings in which the historic characteristics have been irreparably modified. They may also include buildings that, while noncontributing at present, may become contributing through the application of appropriate design criteria.
- H. "Preservation" shall mean the identification, study, protection, restoration, rehabilitation or enhancement of historical improvements.

17.65.030 Historic Preservation Overlay District. The Historic Preservation Overlay District is hereby established to include all areas and structures designated as historic districts or historic buildings pursuant to this Chapter.

- A. Area of Application. The Historic Preservation Overlay District shall apply to the following described property and such historical districts and historical buildings that may be added by the City Council as herein provided.
 - 1. Main Street Vacaville Historic District as designated on Figure 1 of the ordinance codified in this Chapter and on file in the Office of the City Clerk.
- B. Designation on the Zoning Map. The Zone Plan District Maps shall be amended to indicate the application of the Historic Preservation Overlay District. The designation "(H)" shall be added after the underlying zoning designation. For example, a property in the underlying Central Commercial District and also within the Historic Preservation Overlay District would be designated "CC(H)".

17.65.040 Designation of Historic Districts and Buildings.

- A. Criteria for Designation. For the purpose of this Chapter, an improvement may be designated a historic building and may be designated as a historic building by the City Council, and any area within the city may be designated an historical district by the City Council pursuant to this Section if it meets any of the following criteria:
 - 1. Historic and Cultural Significance
 - a. The structure or district proposed for designation is particularly representative of a distinct historical period, type, style, region, or way of life.
 - b. The structure or district proposed for designation is, or contains, a type of building or buildings which was once common but is now rare.

- c. The structure or district proposed for designation was connected with someone renowned or important, or a local personality.
 - d. The structure or district proposed for designation is connected with a business or use which was once common but is now rare.
 - e. The structure or district proposed for designation represents the work of a master builder, engineer, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.
 - f. The structure or district proposed for designation is the site of an important historic event or is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state, or community.
 - g. The structure or district proposed for designation has a high potential of yielding information of archeological interest.
2. Historic, Architectural, and Engineering Significance
- a. The structure or district proposed for designation exemplifies a particular architectural style or way of life important to the city.
 - b. The structure or district proposed for designation exemplifies the best remaining architectural type of a neighborhood.
 - c. The construction materials or engineering methods used in the structure or district proposed for designation embody elements of outstanding attention to architectural or engineering design, detail, material, or craftsmanship.
3. Neighborhood and Geographic Setting
- a. The structure materially benefits the historic character of the neighborhood.
 - b. The unique location or singular physical characteristic of the structure or district proposed for designation represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or city.
 - c. The district is a geographically definable area, urban or rural, possessing a significant concentration or continuity of site, buildings, structures, or objects unified by past events, or aesthetically by plan or physical development.
 - d. The preservation of a structure is essential to the integrity of the district.
- B. Designation Procedures. Historic district or buildings shall be designated by the City Council in the following manner:
- 1. Any person may request the designation of an improvement as a historic building or the designation of an historic district by submitting an application for such designation to the Planning Commission. The Commission or City Council may also initiate such proceedings on their own motion.
 - 2. The Planning Director shall conduct a study of the proposed designation and make a preliminary determination based on such documentation as it may require, as to its appropriateness for consideration. If the Director determines that the application merits consideration, but only if he so determines, he shall schedule a public hearing in a timely manner.
 - 3. The Planning Director's decision to schedule or not to schedule a public hearing shall be in writing and shall be filed with the Building Official and the City Clerk. Notice of a decision not to schedule a public hearing shall be given by mail to the applicant. No building, alteration, demolition, or removal permits for any improvement within the proposed historic district or building shall be issued while the public hearing or any appeal related thereto is pending. The decision of the Planning Director not to hold a public hearing on an application for designation of a historic district, building or site may be appealed to the Planning Commission.
 - 4. Notice of the date, place, time, and purpose of the hearing shall be given

by first class mail to the applicants, owners, and occupants of the improvement at least 10 days prior to the date of the public hearing, using the name and address of such owners as shown on the latest equalized assessment rolls, and shall be advertised once in a daily newspaper of general circulation at least 10 days prior to the public hearing.

5. At the conclusion of the public hearing, but in no event more than 30 days from the date set for the initial public hearing for the designation of a proposed historic building or historic district, the Commission shall recommend approval in whole or in part, or disapproval in whole or in part, of the application in writing.
 6. The City Council, within 30 days of receipt of the recommendations from the Planning Commission, shall schedule a public hearing on the application, providing notice in accordance with subsection 4 above, and following such hearing shall by ordinance approve the application in whole or part, or shall by motion disapprove it in its entirety.
 7. Failure to send any notice by mail to any property owner where the address of such owner is not a matter of public record shall not invalidate any proceedings in connection with the proposed designation. The Commission and Council may also give such other notice as they may deem desirable and practicable.
- C. Determination of Contributing and Noncontributing Buildings. In conjunction with the designation of a Historic District, the Planning Commission shall recommend and the Council shall designate all buildings within the district as contributing or noncontributing.

17.65.050 Design Review of Building Alterations.

- A. Design Review Procedure. Applications for the alteration of designated historic buildings or for buildings located within a designated historic district shall be processed in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 17.60 except as modified by the provisions of this Section.
1. Minor Alterations. The Planning Director shall be authorized to approve applications for minor alterations to existing buildings including, but not limited to, repainting in accordance with a color palette approved by the Design Review Committee, replacement of minor landscape features and signing in conformance with criteria adopted by the Design Review Committee.
 2. Major Alterations. The Design Review Committee shall be authorized to approve applications for alterations to existing buildings not determined to be minor by the Planning Director and for the construction of new buildings.
 - a. Design Review Committee Composition. The membership of the Design Review Committee shall be expanded to a total of seven members for the purpose of considering applications for major alterations. The two additional members shall include a person with a demonstrated interest in local history or historic preservation and a person who is either engaged in business or owns property in an historic district or a designated historic building.
- B. Design Review Criteria. The City Council shall, by resolution, adopt design review criteria to serve as a basis for the Design Review Committee in the review of applications for the alteration of buildings or construction of new buildings within a historic district or the alteration of a designated historic building. Said criteria shall be consistent with the Standards of Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings as approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

17.65.060 Demolition of Historic Structures.

- A. Notice Required. Demolition, wholly or partially of a contributing building in a historical district or a designated historic building is prohibited unless the property owner of such structure gives the Planning Commission, one hundred eighty (180) days prior, written notice that such act is planned for such structure. Subject to the provisions of subsection (B) below, no application to the city for a permit to carry out such demolition shall be accepted during said one hundred eighty (180) day notice period. Following the receipt of such notice, the Planning Commission may take such steps as it determines are

necessary to preserve the structure concerned. The Commission may, among other things:

1. Seek local trusts and other financial sources which may be willing to purchase the structure for restoration.
2. Publicize with the owner's consent the availability of the structure for purchase for restoration purposes.
3. Make recommendations to the Council concerning the acquisition of development rights or facade easements and the imposition or negotiation of other restrictions of the preservation of the structure.
4. Investigate possible sites for relocation of the structure.
5. Recommend to the Council that the city purchase the structure pursuant to a development plan where it does not appear that private preservation is feasible.

B. Waiver of Notice

1. The Commission, upon the request of the property owner, may waive the requirement of one hundred eighty (180) days prior written notice if the action planned for the structure involves:
 - a. An emergency repair to, or removing an unsafe condition of the structure; or
 - b. A relocation of the structure to a site approved by the Commission.
2. A request by a property owner for waiver of notice shall be considered by the Planning Commission at its next regular meeting after the filing of such request in writing with the Planning Director. However, if the request is filed within 10 days of the next regular meeting of the Commission the request shall be placed on the agenda of the Commission's second regular meeting following the filing of the request.

A decision of the Planning Commission not to waive the notice may be appealed to the City Council.

17.65.070 Substandard Buildings.

- A. The Building Official or the Fire Marshal shall notify the Planning Commission whenever such official declares a designated historic building or structures within a historic district to be a substandard or dangerous building.

Upon receipt of notice from the Building Official or the Fire Marshal the Commission shall evaluate the historic and architectural merit of the structure, and shall submit an advisory report to the Building Official within thirty (30) days.

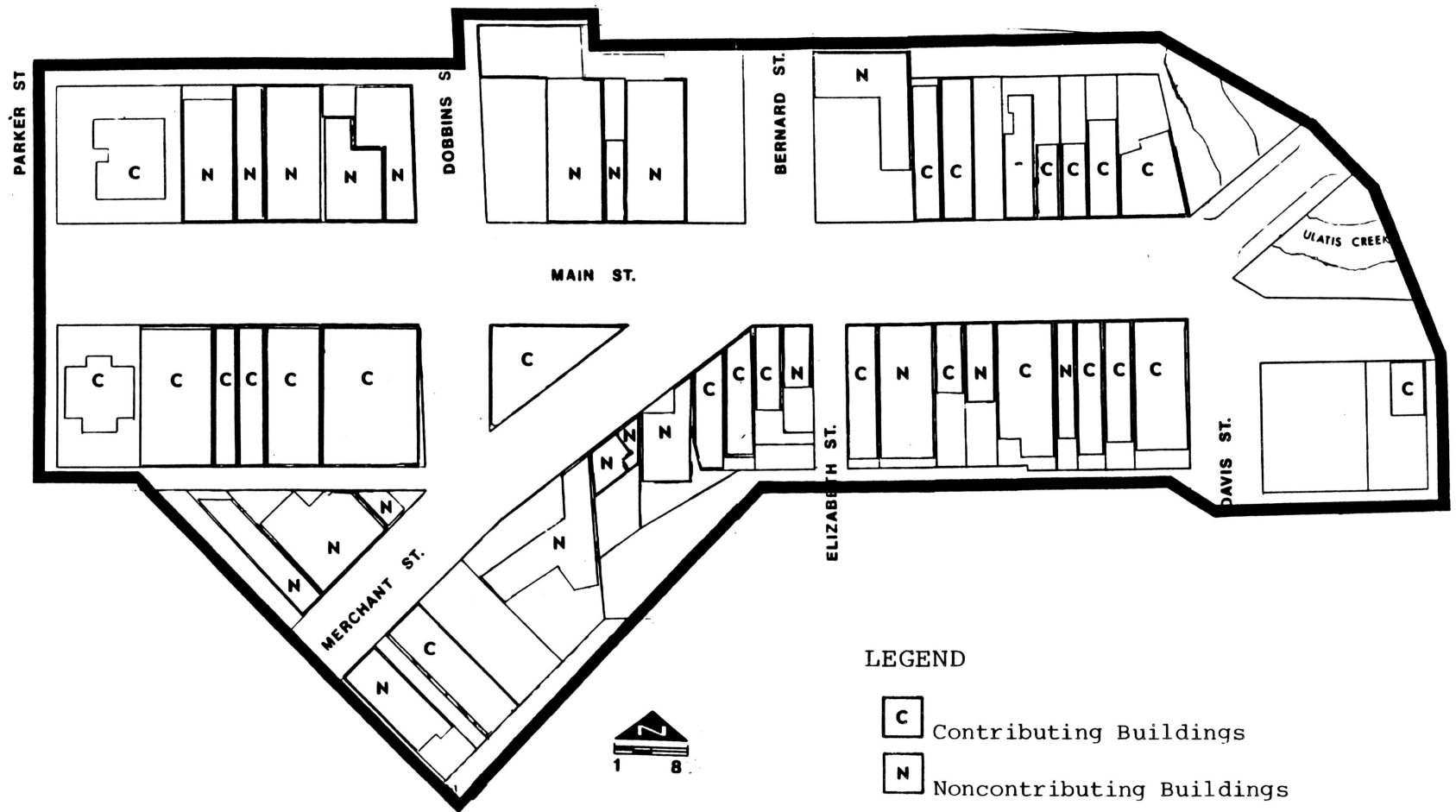
17.65.080 Ordinary Maintenance and Repair.

- A. Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to prevent or to relieve the property owner of responsibility for the ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior architectural feature in or on any property covered by this Chapter that does not involve a change in design, material, color, or external appearance thereof, nor does this Chapter prevent the construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition, or removal of any such feature when the Building Official certifies to the Planning Commission that such action is required for the public safety due to an unsafe or dangerous condition which cannot be rectified through the use of the California Historical Building Code.

17.65.090 Maintenance of Exterior Architectural Features.

- A. The owner, occupant, or other person in actual charge of a designated historic building or structure in an historic district shall keep in good repair all of the exterior portions of such improvement, and all interior portions thereof whose maintenance is necessary to prevent deterioration and decay of any exterior architectural feature whenever the improvement is subject to a design review approval pursuant to the provisions of this Chapter.

FIGURE I MAIN STREET VACAVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT



PART IV

PROPOSED DESIGN CRITERIA

The Design Criteria that follow were developed by the Historic District Review Committee to serve as a guide to persons who are interested in rehabilitating a building in the Main Street Vacaville Historic District. The standards are expressed in design terms and are generally flexible and not absolutely limiting. The Design Criteria are tailored to the buildings on Main Street. They are intended to comply with federal criteria established for maximum tax benefits.

MAIN STREET VACAVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT
DESIGN CRITERIA

INTRODUCTION

The City of Vacaville has recognized the Main Street area as having unique historical and architectural value through the establishment of the Main Street Vacaville Historic District. The Historic District is one of several tools that the community is utilizing to promote private, economic revitalization of the area while preserving the physical record of Vacaville's past.

These design criteria are intended to provide a basis for decisions of both the Design Review Committee and property owners who want to improve the appearance of their properties. The design criteria provide opportunities for appropriate design flexibility and alternatives in the rehabilitation of historic buildings.

For the property owner, these criteria will aid in making decisions when the owner invests in altering the appearance of a property. Alternatives that would obscure or destroy significant architectural features can more easily be avoided, as can indulgence in fads that would not be good investments over the long term.

Sensible choices, made with the help of good guidelines, can prolong the life of the property and investment. Such work, whether simple maintenance or elaborate restoration, should contribute to the character of the neighborhood or setting of the property, not detract from it.

In evaluating the design qualities of the Main Street Vacaville Historic District, the types of materials and the design configurations of existing architectural components and the nature of remodelings through the years were examined. Photographic evidence of the architectural history of downtown Vacaville was also examined. The data collected formed the basis of the design and maintenance guidelines that follow. The City of Vacaville Department of Community Development maintains a survey of all properties within the Main Street Vacaville Historic District which includes historical data, photographs, newspaper articles and other related information. The survey information is available for review by interested parties.

The Main Street Vacaville Historic District has been established to promote the preservation of the unique variety of public and private structures that exist in the area. The contributing buildings within the district were constructed during the period of approximately 1890 to 1940. These design criteria are generally intended to promote the architectural styles of that period, highlighting the variation and diversity of those architectural styles. The district will thus present a physical display of the development and evolution of the community. These design criteria are intended to be applied in evaluating applications for design review and shall be applied as follows for differing situations:

- A. Contributing Buildings - The design criteria should be applied to insure preservation and enhancement of the historical and architectural characteristics of the structure through rehabilitation. Restoration of buildings to their exact former appearance is permitted but not required.
- B. Noncontributing Buildings Constructed Prior to 1935 - The design criteria should be applied to insure that modifications do not increase the noncontributing characteristics of the structure. Application of the design criteria to rehabilitate the structure to become a contributing building is encouraged where possible.
- C. Noncontributing Buildings Constructed After 1935 - The design criteria should be reviewed to insure that modifications do not add to the intrusive character of the structure. The modification of buildings to be compatible with the 1890-1930 era is encouraged.

- D. New Construction - New construction standards should be applied to achieve compatibility and harmony with surrounding structures and the district.

DESIGN CRITERIA POLICY STANDARDS

In order to provide overall direction in the establishment of design criteria these policy standards are established. These policy standards are the basis of the more detailed standards which follow and are a statement of the City of Vacaville's policy towards buildings in the Main Street Vacaville Historic District.

- A. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purposes.
- B. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.
- D. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
- E. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.
- F. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.
- G. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.
- H. Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by or adjacent to any project.
- I. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.
- J. Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.
- K. Interior features of historical significance, such as stairways, lightwells, pressed metal ceilings, ornate woodwork, etc., should be integrated into the design of any adaptive use.

REHABILITATION STANDARDS

The criteria proposed herein are intended to permit reasonable design flexibility in the rehabilitation of historic buildings while insuring that the basic historic and architectural presentation of the building is retained and enhanced.

- A. Storefronts

1. Where original old storefronts remain, their appearance should not be altered. Such storefronts should be repaired and preserved. Where storefronts have been altered, the original design should be determined by examining photographs from the period and by investigating any original architectural fabric that remains beneath the changes. As much original material and detail should be retained in the rehabilitation as possible. Retention of cast-iron elements is particularly important for structural and waterproofing reasons. Wood or stone steps, stone sills, and other elements that contribute to the character of storefront entries should be preserved.
2. Where most of the existing architectural design dates from an interim remodeling and where this remodeling adds to the historical character of the Historic District, rehabilitation might conform to the period of this remodeling and not to the original design.
3. Where the original design cannot be determined or where financial considerations preclude full-scale rehabilitation of a storefront that has already been altered, a design that is not a pure rehabilitation but that is in keeping with the design of the rest of the building may be appropriate. The general proportions, materials, colors, rhythm of solids to voids, repetition of design elements and directional expression (the effect of verticality or horizontality) common to the street should be followed in designing new storefronts. Use of materials not in existence when a storefront was built should be discouraged in its rehabilitation.
4. The architectural integrity of the buildings in the Historic District should be preserved. Accessories, such as light fixtures, that poorly imitate the designs of these eras should be prohibited. Faithful reproductions of accessories appropriate to the years during which the buildings in the Historic District were constructed should be encouraged.
5. Canvas awnings are traditional to the Historic District and are an acceptable element of storefronts. The size and scale of awnings should be appropriate to the building to which they are attached, based on photographic and documentary evidence. Color choice should be made with discretion and awnings should be placed so that a minimum clearance of eight feet from the sidewalk is maintained. Metal awnings, glass awnings, and glass canopies are not in keeping with the prevailing character of the Historic District and should be prohibited.
6. Wooden balconies, canopies and porches are traditional to some buildings within the Historic District and are an acceptable element of storefronts where such features can be appropriately documented. The recreation of such elements should be carefully considered to insure that they are a faithful reproduction of original features based on photographic and documentary evidence. Interim building modifications that in themselves represent an important historical era or architectural style in the development of the area should not, however, be obscured or destroyed in the rebuilding of these features.

B. Windows and Doors

1. Where they still exist, the original sills, lintels, frames, sash, muntins, and glass of windows and transoms should be preserved. The original doorway elements, including sills, lintels, frames, and the doors should also be retained. When they must be replaced, the replacements should duplicate the originals in design and materials.
2. Glass in windows, doors, and transoms should be clear except where documentary evidence indicates the original use of colored glass. Plastic materials should not be used in place of glass. Any existing small paned transoms should not be

obscured on the exterior.

3. The original proportions of wall openings should be retained. Blocking of any existing openings to accommodate standard sash and glass sizes, to hide ceiling lowered beneath the top of existing windows, or for any other reason should not be allowed.
4. Decorative wood or metal lintels, brackets, and any other window or doorway trim should be preserved and should be restored where possible.
5. In rehabilitation, the original number of panes in glazed areas should be used.

C. Cornices

1. Cornices should be restored to their original appearance, using original materials where possible and duplications of the original where necessary. Original materials were wood, plaster, or metal.
2. In some instances, duplication of the original cornice using contemporary materials may be necessary, although the use of materials in existence when the original was constructed is the preferred treatment.
3. Where the use of the original materials is not feasible, surviving cornice elements should be retained and repaired. An alternative to full-scale rehabilitation may be construction of a new cornice of contemporary but sympathetic design in the same design relation to the rest of the building as the original cornice.
4. Where possible, brick corbels should be restored and treated in the same manner as brick wall surfaces.
5. Gutters, downspouts, and flashing should be inconspicuous unless their conspicuous appearance is documented by vintage photographs.

D. Roofs

1. Roofs retaining their original shapes should be maintained. In some cases, where roof shapes have been altered, restoration to original appearance may be possible.
2. Contemporary roofing materials are acceptable. Where roofs are visible, roofing materials should be dark. Flashing should be unobtrusive.
3. Pseudo-mansard roofs applied to storefronts should only be considered when photographic evidence indicates the prior existence of such features and should be reconstructed to be consistent with that prior feature.

E. Building Materials

1. Brick

- a. Brick is a dominant building material in the Historic District. Brick should be treated and maintained in a manner that will preserve it and should not be treated in a manner that will deface it or accelerate deterioration. It should not be covered by synthetic brick or stone, by asbestos or wood shingles, by wood or aluminum siding, or by synthetic materials of any other kind.
- b. Sandblasting accelerates the deterioration of brick and should not be used. Sandblasting gouges the mortar joints between bricks, admitting water, which freezes, expands, and breaks the bricks.
- c. Brick may be cleaned by applying mild chemical solvents,

by scrubbing with stiff nonferrous brushes, or by spraying with water under high pressure.

- d. Brick that has already been sandblasted should be treated with clear silicone every two to four years to repel water. However, treating with silicone is not the equivalent of retaining the original glaze.
- e. When repointing is necessary to replace deteriorated mortar or to stop water damage, loose mortar should be raked out to a depth of approximately one-half inch to one inch in both vertical and horizontal joints and the brick washed to remove small particles that remain. Joints should not be sawed.
- f. When deteriorating brick must be replaced, replacements should match the old brick in color, texture, size, and coursing technique. Mortar should be painted to match existing joints. Replacement brick should be laid in the same bond as the original.
- g. Repainting is preferred to cleaning brick that has previously been painted. Painting brick that has not previously been painted is an appropriate way to unify a facade for which the original brick color, size, texture, coursing technique, and mortar appearance cannot be matched in repair work and in which this inconsistency is visually disruptive. The color of paint to be applied to brick surfaces should generally match the natural color of the brick.
- h. Many of the buildings in the Historic District have been stuccoed. Stucco is very difficult to remove from brick, especially soft brick, and therefore its removal is not recommended. Although stucco may be removed laboriously by use of hammer and chisel, the chisel marks often mark the brick. If wire mesh was attached to the brick to hold the stucco, the mesh may be pulled from the surface of the brick to remove the stucco. The recommended treatment of stuccoed brick is smoothing the surface with a skim coat of stucco.

2. Wood

Wood is not common as a primary structural material in the Historic District. Wood frame accessory features such as skylights, however, should be retained as they constitute important elements of the buildings and offer unique opportunities for variation in mass, color and texture. Restoration techniques should be as gentle as possible and should not include sandblasting. Where replacement of wooden exterior features or portions of such features is necessary, the new structure should be a faithful reproduction.

3. Architectural Metals

Architectural metals are utilized as an exterior structural element in several buildings within the Historic District. They constitute an important architectural feature and should be preserved. Cast iron storefront frames should be treated sensitively and covered with protective paint or sealer. Pressed metal cornice and trim elements should likewise be protected.

NEW CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

The criteria proposed herein are based on a combination of existing and historical design elements common to the Historic District and identify sets of relationships and materials common to the Main Street commercial buildings. The objective is not to mimic historic structures but to assure that new design, while contemporary, will be compatible with the existing character.

The criteria must have flexibility. In any new construction, the immediate frame of reference will be buildings adjacent to the lot being developed. The new design should relate primarily to the historical design elements found on adjacent buildings and should secondarily consider the effect of the design on the total character of the streetscape.

- A. It is the intent of these criteria for new construction to assist construction of contemporary architecture compatible with the traditional building forms of Vacaville. "Wild West" theme construction typified by false front architecture embellished with Gingerbread-style detail, board-and-batten siding, and bright colors are not appropriate and should not be considered an acceptable building motif.
- B. New construction should maintain the continuity of existing rows of buildings or help to establish such continuity. Facades should be constructed at the property line(s) facing the street(s).
- C. The front and side walls of new construction should be parallel to the property lines. Polygonal and circular-shaped buildings should be prohibited.
- D. New buildings should be constructed to within 25 percent of the average height of existing adjacent buildings. The maximum height of any new building should be 40 feet. The minimum height should be 15 feet. Sidewalk-level commercial space should have a minimum ceiling height of 10 feet from the floor.
- E. Brick is the preferred exterior material for new construction. The color and texture should be similar to that of brick historically used in Vacaville. Stuccoed surfaces may be permitted on a limited basis. The use of wood, synthetic, and metal siding should be prohibited.
- F. A new facade should be rectangular in shape and its proportions (width in relation to height) should be consistent or compatible with the proportions of adjacent historic buildings. The principal directional expression of new facades may be horizontal or vertical. Facades of one-story buildings should be organized into three horizontal or vertical bands: storefront, solid wall space above storefront, and cornice with or without parapet. Two-story buildings should be organized into three or four horizontal bands: storefront, horizontal band (optional), second floor, and cornice (with or without parapet). These bands should align with those of adjacent buildings.
- G. Facades should be organized into multiple bays. The directional expression of windows and doors should be vertical, though several vertical elements may be combined to form a horizontal opening.
- H. New construction details should approximate the character of historic details found in the Historic District. Reproduction of historic building details is discouraged, except where the reconstruction of historic buildings may be appropriate.
- I. New storefronts should approximate the character of those built in the past within the Historic District: the double doors of some of the oldest buildings, the recessed entry with flanking showcases of the 1880-1940 period, and others that can be photographically documented. Storefronts with recessed entries should be divided into three bands: a transom band, a band of display windows, and a small spandrel or paneled bank under display windows. Proportions of storefronts should be consistent with those of historical storefronts. Storefront should be 10 feet high, including the transom band. Metal storefront elements should not leave exposed the natural color of the metal. Dark anodized finishes are preferred, as are colors traditionally used in the Historic District.
- J. Awnings attached above street-level storefronts should be encouraged. Mansard, free form, or geometric sidewalk roofs should be prohibited.

- K. False fronts or parapet walls should conceal roofs from public view. Mansard, free form, and geometric roof shapes should be prohibited.
- L. The scale of new construction should be harmonious with that of adjacent buildings. Materials, signs, and other elements of new construction should be consistent with the scale of similar elements found in adjacent historic buildings.
- M. Those sections of the Rehabilitation Guidelines discussing store-front design, canopies, and awning also apply to new construction.

GENERAL BUILDING STANDARDS

These standards should be applied to all alterations or new construction in the Historic District.

A. Color

Color choice for building exteriors may express individual taste, but should always contribute to the historical character of this Historic District and should be based on historical precedent. Exterior colors should harmonize with other colors on the same building and on the streetscape. Exterior colors should compliment the colors of neighboring buildings and should be selected to be mutually supportive and beneficial to the overall historic character of the streetscape.

1. Where wood or metal surfaces of windows, doors, porches, and details other than cornices are to be painted, a range of color choices is available. During the early twentieth century, muted colors and earth colors were favored. They included gray, dark brown, dark green, blue gray, beige, brick red, and terra cotta. The lead content of paint at that time precluded the production of pure white paint, but lead white, a slightly grayish-white, was frequently used for major surface areas and for details. Lead white is an appropriate choice for window sash and frames and for other details. In some instances, black or dark gray may be appropriate for the fixed window or door frame. If the original color of a cornice cannot be determined, lead white, buff, or "sandstone" color are preferred choices.
2. Where brick has been painted, repainting in a color that approximates that of the natural brick is appropriate. Depending on the paint history of a building, lead white paint may be an acceptable alternative for the facade. Where brick was unpainted and remains unpainted, use of paint on the exterior is discouraged, since unpainted brick is a strong design tradition in the Historic District.
3. Paint colors that were not produced or used during the early twentieth century should be discouraged in the Historic District. Bright, new colors are to be avoided, even when used sparingly. Pastels were not favored other than in tropical climates; their use would be incongruous with the historic setting and should be discouraged. High gloss paints should also be discouraged because they tend to highlight the imperfections of the material they cover.
4. Minimizing the number of colors will maximize their effect. Architectural details such as incised panels, brackets, consoles, dentils, scrollwork, stiles and rails, lintels and sills, cornices, fascias, and other millwork elements were not accentuated by polychrome. The introduction of additional color competes with the geometric nature of these elements and produces a visually distracting effect that should be discouraged.

B. Signing

Signing within the Historic District should serve to identify the businesses in a manner that is consistent with the architectural

integrity of the area. The standards established in this section should be considered as a basis for design review as opposed to entitlements. Signing should be designed to fit the individual building in terms of size, placement, graphics and color and should be recognized as an integral part of the building design. Well-designed signs complement each other and serve to enhance the appearance of the uses they serve.

1. Sign Placement

As a primary consideration sign placement should be directly related to the exterior design of a building. Signing should be located within the features of the facade and should not cover important features or cross transitions between features. Signing should be at the first floor level, should not project above the cornice line and should be primarily oriented to the pedestrian scale. However, painted lettering on second story windows to identify separate uses located on a second floor is appropriate.

Signs should generally be flush with the facade, however, projecting signs may be considered where the sign does not conflict with the exterior design and is consistent with the era of the district. Symbolic three dimensional signs such as barber poles are encouraged. Signing painted on canvas awnings is also permitted.

Each business should be limited to one primary sign except those buildings on corners where one sign on each frontage may be appropriate.

2. Sign Area

- a. A maximum area of 1 square foot of signing is permitted for each linear foot of a business on a primary frontage. A primary frontage is defined as the portion of a building occupied by a business which includes a storefront and faces a public street. Projecting signs may be permitted with a maximum projection of 5 feet and a maximum area of 25 square feet.
- b. A maximum of 1/2 square foot of signing is permitted for each linear foot of a business on a secondary frontage. A secondary frontage is defined as the portion of a building occupied by a business which either faces an alley, or adjacent building, or a parking lot, or does not have a storefront.
- c. Each business with first floor frontage or direct sidewalk access may have a pedestrian-oriented sign sign attached below the marquee or canopy not exceeding six (6) square feet per sign face and with a minimum ground clearance of seven (7) feet above the sidewalk grade. Such a sign will not count as part of the maximum sign allowance for a business frontage.
- d. Multi-tenant buildings or businesses within a row of buildings may be permitted a directory-type sign located on the side of a building facing an alley or parking lot, with each business allowed up to an 8" x 36" sign per directory. Such a sign will not count against the maximum sign allowance for the business frontages.

3. Materials

Signs should generally be constructed of materials consistent with the era of the district. Internally illuminated, metal "can" signs are generally not appropriate. Signs made of wood or non-shiny metal, painted directly on plain surfaces and painted on canvas awnings are generally appropriate. Illumination should generally be indirect such as that provided by "goose necked" light fixtures. Flashing or intermittent illumination is not permitted.

4. Graphics

- a. Graphics should be simple and bold. Lettering styles adopted for the Historic District are attached as Figure 1.
- b. Registered trademarks, portrayal of specific commodities or signs advertising or identifying an individual brand or brands of products should not exceed 10% of the total sign area. If the trademark or commodity represents the principal activity conducted, an increased percentage may be allowed. Regardless, the graphics for such signs are encouraged to be representative of the time period of 1890-1930 as to conform with the era of the district.

OTHER PROVISIONS

The following provisions are references and hereby incorporated into these Design Criteria.

1. The Secretary of the Interior's: Standards of Rehabilitation and Guidelines are Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. These standards and guidelines are a part of the design criteria for the rehabilitation of contributing buildings. These standards are utilized in the review of improvements for certain income tax benefits.
2. State of California Administrative Code, Title 14, Part 8: State Historical Building Code. This regulation deals with as many aspects of alternative approaches to the prevailing codes as possible, including among other topics structural, fire safety, handicapped requirements, and the use of archaic materials.

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APPENDIX

- A. Excerpts from the General Plan Policy
- B. Excerpts from the Commercial Development Action Plan
- C. Summary of Tax Benefits for Historical Building Renovation

Policies

Central Business District (CBD)

General

1. Reestablish the central business district (CBD) as the economic, social, political and symbolic core of the city; improve blighted neighborhoods in the central area (i.e., the Catherine/Wilson hill). The central district of Vacaville should serve as the primary commercial center for Vacaville. This function includes provisions for sub-regional comparative shopping needs; administrative, professional, financial and other community oriented office activities; and commercial and public recreation accommodations serving the community at large.

Land Use

Figure LU-2 illustrates the CBD land use policies.

1. Provide additional land in the CBD to accommodate office types of uses which can benefit from the CBD's central location and the proximity to retail uses. The area east of Depot Street and south of Ulatis Creek should be converted to office and business service use. Development regulations should be drafted to encourage assemblage of small parcels to accommodate planned and well-designed intermixing of uses.
2. Set aside sufficient land in the CBD for expansion of retail uses to accommodate projected retail demand but insure that the land is compact enough to permit the area to function as a pedestrian-oriented shopping area.
3. Concentrate community-oriented retailing within the area generally bounded by Cernon Street, Monte Vista, Depot Street, and Mason Street. Main Street should be extended to the east to relate to and incorporate Ulatis Creek.
4. Improve Andrews Park to serve as a central focus for communitywide recreation needs. Allowances should be made to incorporate future community cultural facilities as needed.
5. Provide housing opportunities close to and within the CBD. Established residential areas in the immediate vicinity of the CBD should be protected from intrusion by commercial uses, and the liveability of these areas should be enhanced. Future CBD development regulations should permit, subject to special conditions, residential uses on upper stories in combination with office and retail activities.

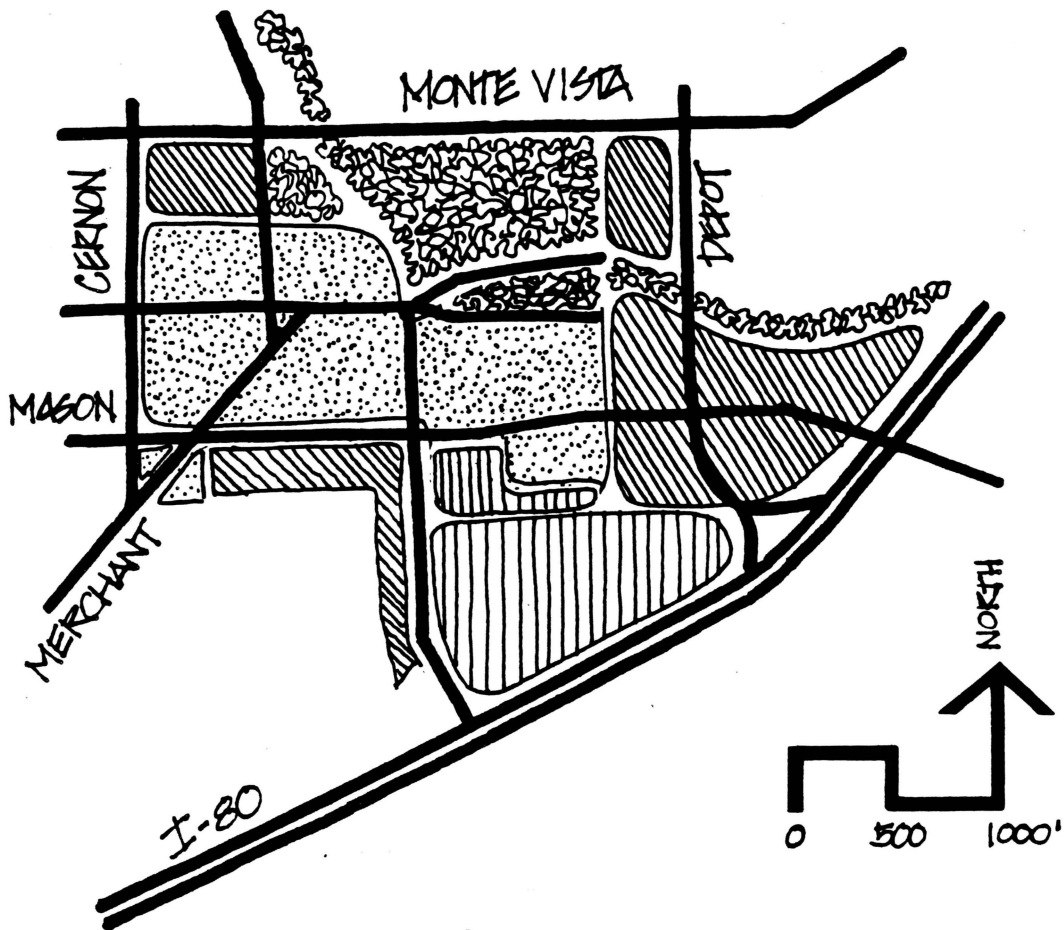


Figure LU-2 CBD LAND USE

PRIMARY USE *



RETAIL

OFFICE BUSINESS SERVICES

INDUSTRIAL

PARK AND RECREATION

* DIAGRAM DESIGNATES THE PRIMARY USE. AN INTERMIXING OF USES IS PERMISSIBLE. SUBSEQUENT SPECIFIC PLAN FOR THE CBD SHOULD SPECIFY OTHER PERMITTED USES AND THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THESE USES ARE TO BE PERMITTED.

6. In order to promote energy conservation and transit service objectives, encourage a multiple-purpose travel pattern by clustering uses in the downtown area which serve the entire Vacaville area.
7. Enhance auto access to downtown by: (a) improving Davis Street to serve as the major approach to downtown from I-80; and (b) providing for the direct connection of the I-80 westbound on and off-ramps with Depot Street.

Circulation

Figure LU-3 illustrates the CBD circulation policies.

1. Establish a major arterial system which routes traffic around the CBD. The major arterials should consist of Cernon, Monte Vista, Depot, Mason and Merchant Streets.
2. Provide convenient access to downtown by foot from adjoining residential areas.
3. Provide convenient bicycle access to downtown from all parts of the city.
4. Establish Main Street as the main spine of the downtown retail area; design the street to give pedestrian movement priority over vehicular traffic.
5. Determine the specific traffic function and design requirements of other downtown streets within the arterial street loop as a part of the specific plan for downtown.
6. Provide future parking on a consolidated basis rather than on an individual site-by-site basis. A coordinated system of parking areas linked directly to the major arterial system should be developed.

Design

Figure LU-4 illustrates the CBD design policies.

1. Ulatis Creek should serve as both a major feature of the commercial area and a public recreation amenity.
2. Extend parklike development along Ulatis Creek to the portion of downtown east of Depot Street with the creek serving as the boundary between designated residential and commercial uses.
3. Undertake a major street redesign and landscaping program for the arterials surrounding and approaching downtown to improve the image of this area and to clarify the organization of the street system.
4. Retain buildings associated with Vacaville's history and readapt to contemporary uses.

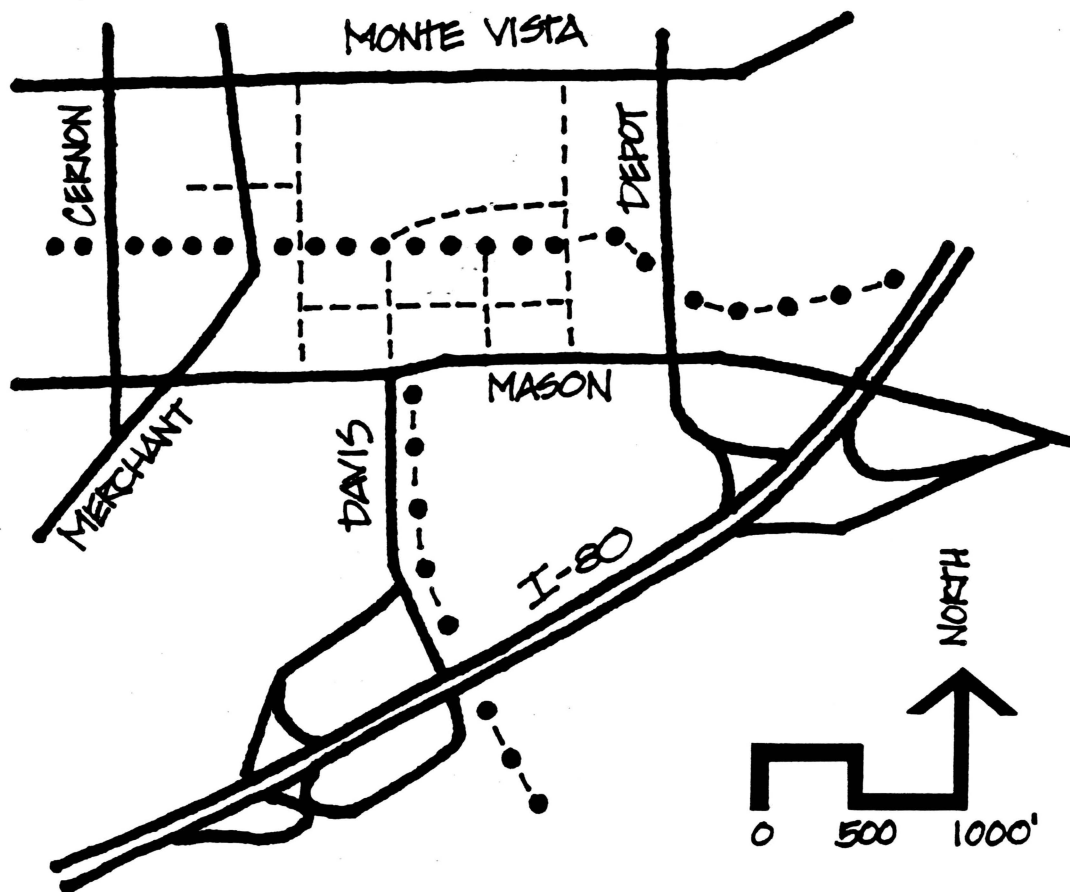


Figure LU-3 CBD CIRCULATION

- MAJOR ARTERIAL**
- PEDESTRIAN SPINE -
PRIORITY GIVEN TO PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT**
- INTERNAL CIRCULATION ROUTES -
ROLE AND DESIGN TO BE DETERMINED BY SPECIFIC PLAN**
- .-.-.- BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH**

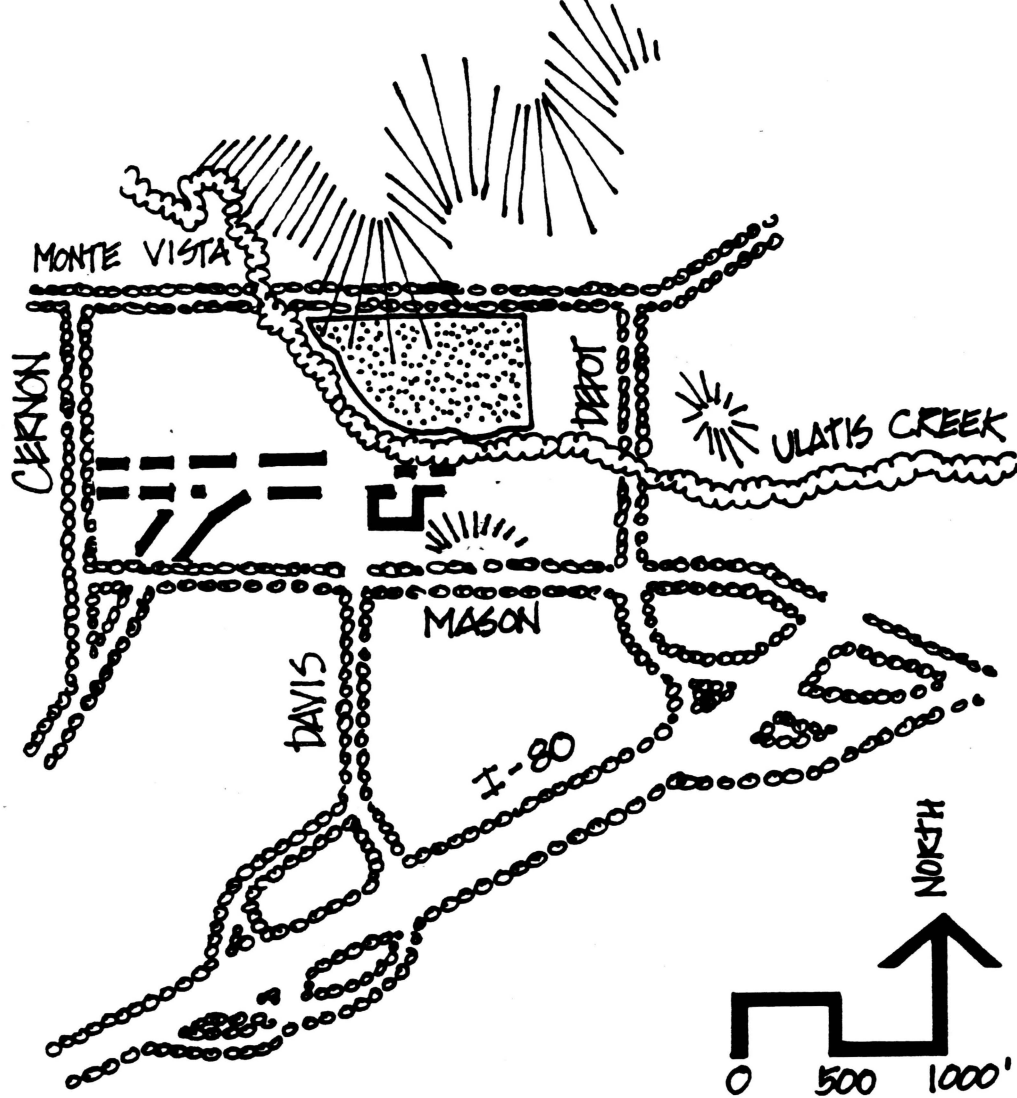
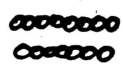


Figure LU-4 CBD URBAN DESIGN



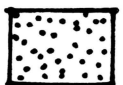
STREET REDESIGN AND LANDSCAPING REQUIRED



HILL FORM TO BE PROTECTED



CREEK AND RIPARIAN VEGETATION TO BE RETAINED



PARK



PRIMARY RETAIL FRONTAGE - MAINTAIN UNINTERRUPTED FACADES AND DESIGN STREET SPACE FOR PEDESTRIAN USE

5. Retain the small-town scale and character conveyed by development along Main Street and adhere to this same scale in new commercial development proposed on Main Street east of Davis Street. Maintain transition between older commercial and residential areas.
6. Retain hill forms within and adjoining the CBD to help define the location and setting of the CBD. In those portions where development is permitted, buildings should be designed to emphasize the hill forms and to maximize the view opportunities from these areas.
7. Establish specific design requirements for streets within downtown as part of a plan for downtown to recognize differences in pedestrian and vehicular function and the commercial uses of the various street segments.
8. Establish design guidelines to govern the construction of new buildings and the remodeling of existing structures. The guidelines should establish a coherent design concept for the CBD but avoid imposing a rigid, stylistic requirement for individual building design.

III. Commercial Development Concepts

The preceding chapters focused upon identifying the market demand potential for comparison retail, restaurant, and office development and upon the physical opportunities and constraints that influence the city's ability to realize that potential. Emphasis has been placed on specific commercial subareas which include 1) the central business district, 2) the Interstate 80 corridor, and 3) the city's neighborhood commercial areas. As an intermediate step before the formulation of an implementation strategy, commercial development concepts were formulated to reflect the findings of the market and physical assessments and the fundamental roles each of the subareas will play with respect to Vacaville commercial activity citywide.

For each subarea discussed in this chapter, existing land use characteristics are reviewed and development/redevelopment concepts are presented. The chapter concludes by presenting case studies of selected California cities that have undertaken related improvement programs or strategies to enhance the economic vitality of their respective communities.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD)

Existing Land Use Conditions

As indicated in the market analysis chapter, retail space in the downtown is characterized mostly by older shops consisting of one story structures. They generally range in size from approximately 500 to 4,000 square feet, but some larger buildings reach 10,000 square feet. This subarea contains 42 percent (130,040 square feet) and nearly 27 percent (38,380 square feet) of the total citywide supply of comparison retail and restaurant space, respectively. Most restaurants in the CBD are of the dining variety, as compared to fast food which tends to dominate other subareas.

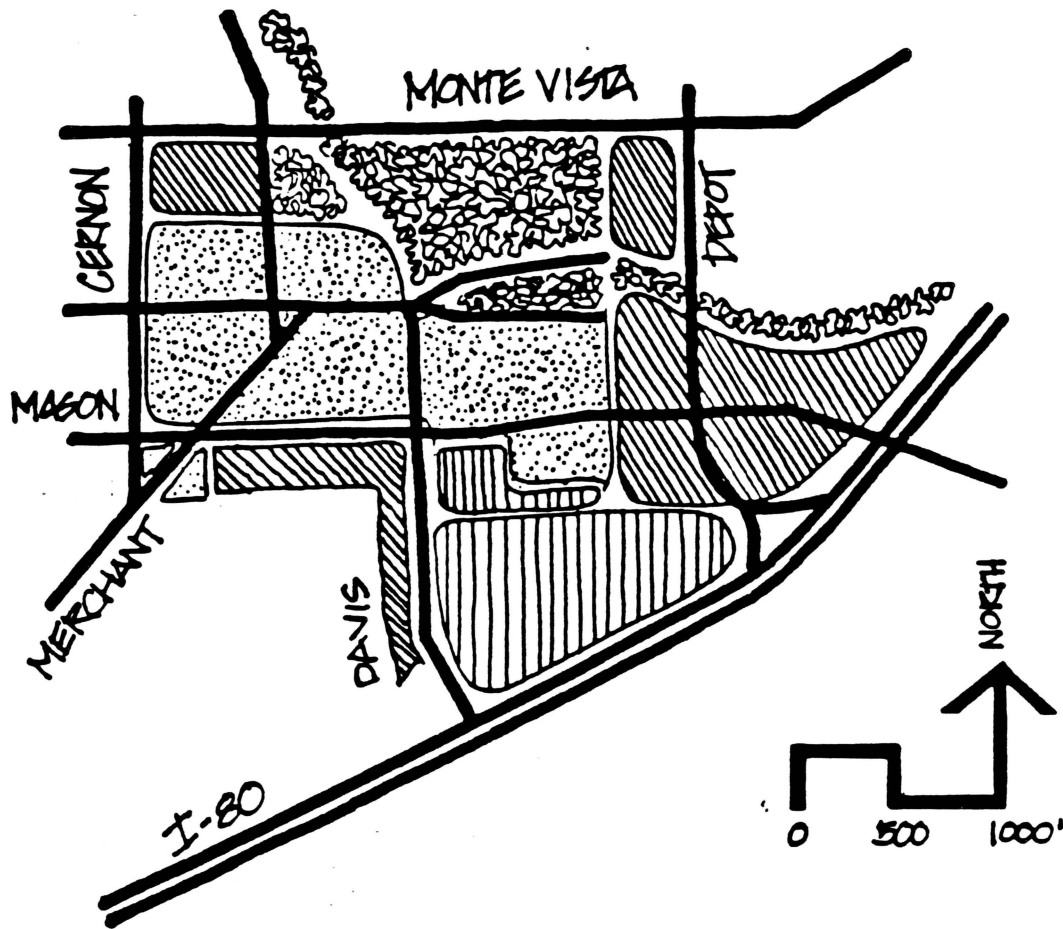
Generally speaking, these parcels are less than 50 percent developed. Although some are located contiguously along the west side of Cernon Street between Mason and Stevenson Streets, most are concentrated contiguously on the periphery of the CBD's core in the southeast sector, between Stevenson and Mason Streets and west of Davis. In total, commercial CBD acreage characterized as "underutilized" approximates 9 acres.

As delineated in the General Plan, the city's central business district encompass an area which extends east and southeast from the currently developed commercial core (see Figure 5). The portion that extends east of Davis Street along Mason Street serves to link the downtown with the freeway and with the Peabody/Elmira commercial subarea. At present, a portion of this land is zoned for industrial use and contains some low density industrial activity. To successfully merge the downtown and Peabody/Elmira subareas, this industrial area would have to be cleared and rezoned for commercial use.

Concepts for Commercial Development

It is the General Plan policy of the city of Vacaville to improve the central business district's ability to serve as the community's primary commercial center. In this capacity, the CBD should function as the economic, social, political, and symbolic core of the city. To achieve this, it will be necessary for the CBD to undergo a process of revitalization, thereby enhancing its attractiveness for commercial expansion and new business opportunities. This process of revitalization can exist in two forms. First, revitalization can take the form of physical improvements to buildings and streetscapes to enhance the downtown's appearance and image to prospective shoppers and employees. Certain building facades could be upgraded to reflect their historical significance while others could be modernized to conform to appropriate building code standards. Certain streets could be redesigned to reduce automobile access thereby allowing for wider pedestrian walkways with attractive landscaping and furniture (refer to Figure 6).

Figure 5
PROPOSED CBD LAND USE



PRIMARY USE *



RETAIL

OFFICE BUSINESS SERVICES

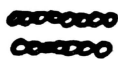
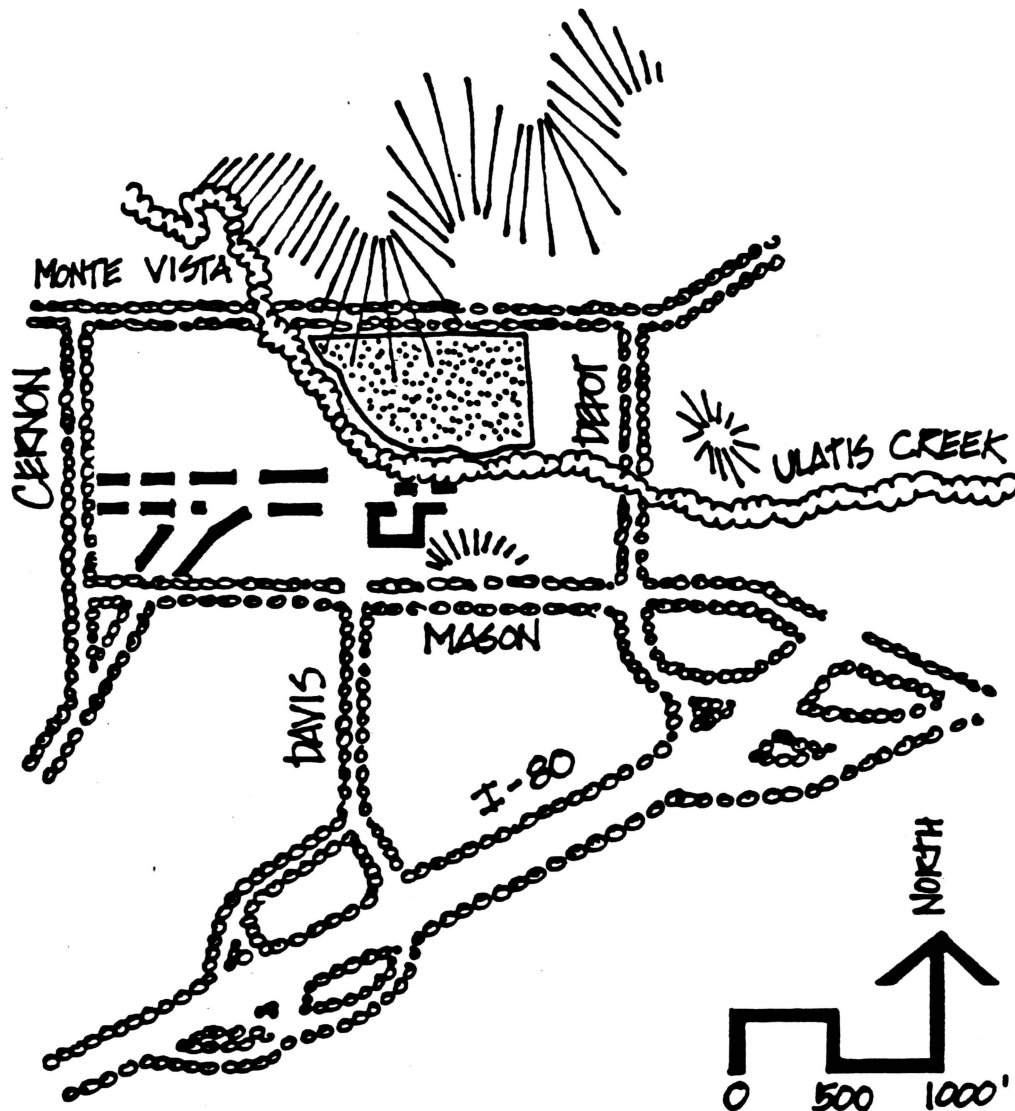
INDUSTRIAL

PARK AND RECREATION

* DIAGRAM DESIGNATES THE PRIMARY USE. AN INTERMIXING OF USES IS PERMISSIBLE. SUBSEQUENT SPECIFIC PLAN FOR THE CBD SHOULD SPECIFY OTHER PERMITTED USES AND THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THESE USES ARE TO BE PERMITTED.

Source: Vacaville General Plan

Figure 6
CBD URBAN DESIGN CONCEPTS



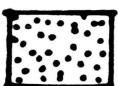
STREET REDESIGN AND LANDSCAPING REQUIRED



HILL FORM TO BE PROTECTED



CREEK AND RIPARIAN VEGETATION TO BE RETAINED



PARK



PRIMARY RETAIL FRONTAGE - MAINTAIN UNINTERRUPTED FACADES AND DESIGN STREET SPACE FOR PEDESTRIAN USE

Source: Vacaville General Plan

CBD revitalization also involved the modernization of general business practices and better use of improved merchandizing and advertising techniques. Such revitalization can be instrumental in improving the city's ability to recapture a portion of sales "leakage" currently expended outside the community. Further, the anticipated influx of new resident population resulting from increased employment opportunities in Vacaville will require local merchants to modernize and improve their general business practices or else risk potential sales loss to other communities. Thus, this second form of CBD revitalization is equally important as the first.

To successfully function as the city's primary commercial center, the CBD must strengthen its local serving capabilities, i.e. improve its ability to meet the needs of the Vacaville resident. To accomplish this, the CBD should contain a mix of commercial land uses which would contribute to the overall economic and social vitality of the downtown. Future office developments should be located within close proximity to retail shops and restaurants to maximize the sales potential of such facilities and in turn, to provide complementary support services for office employees.

Revitalization in the form of physical improvements was mentioned earlier as a means to enhance the attractiveness of the downtown. To help reestablish the CBD as the symbolic core of the city, the historic preservation of certain buildings in the downtown would enable the city to develop a "theme" for the commercial core. The creation of a "theme" furnishes the city a means to establish a unique identity for the downtown, distinguishing it from other commercial subareas in terms of appearance, design, and mix of commercial land uses and social activity. The city's Main Street could logically serve as the focal point for such activity. The creation of a pedestrian orientation on Main Street could incorporate an appropriate "theme", one which accentuates the historic character of certain buildings and provides an environment conducive to shopping and dining. Efforts to improve the pedestrian environment will greatly enhance downtown's attraction to potential customers.

- Although the city's General Plan designates the land area situated between the CBD and the Peabody/Elmira subareas as part of the central business district, it is not currently commercially oriented to either commercial area. The area has no clear function; much of it is vacant or contains very unattractive industrial-type buildings. Unfortunately, this area serves as one of the entrances to the CBD.

The General Plan has designated this land for general commercial use. The development of office or some other commercial use in that area would serve the city in several positive ways. First, it would provide for a centrally-located commercial use which would expand the CBD toward the freeway. Second, it would provide a continuity of land uses from the freeway to the existing commercial uses. Thirdly, it would provide improved visual identity from the freeway of Vacaville. Fourth, it would provide a link between the downtown and the Elmira/Peabody commercial areas.

As the primary center for local-serving commercial activity, the CBD must have good automobile access from existing and future residential developments, particularly from those residential areas located on the south side of Interstate 80. The freeway acts, in many instances, as a man-made barrier between the CBD and households located on the Interstate's south side. As CBD commercial development continues to move east and southeast becoming more visible from Interstate 80, it will become increasingly important to provide good access and signing to guide freeway traffic into the downtown.

INTERSTATE 80 CORRIDOR

Existing Land Use Conditions

At present, Vacaville's Interstate 80 related retail/commercial activity is associated primarily with the Nut Tree and other local restaurants which have long been popular eating places for Bay Area motorists and other visitors to Northern California. These freeway oriented facilities provide approximately 41 percent (59,150 square feet) of total citywide

Information:

from the National Trust for Historic Preservation

Summary of Preservation Tax Incentives in the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981

The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, approved by President Reagan on August 13, 1981, makes dramatic and sweeping changes in the federal tax treatment of investment in real estate. The Internal Revenue Code was revised to add a new accelerated cost recovery system, to repeal existing incentives for rehabilitation of older buildings and for certified rehabilitation of certified historic buildings and to substitute a new three-tiered investment tax credit (ITC) for rehabilitation. The bias in favor of new construction was effectively eliminated. The tax incentives for rehabilitating older buildings were simplified and substantially improved, especially in the case of historic buildings.

The investment tax credit now allowed for certified historic rehabilitation should be a significant stimulus to the identification and designation of individual historic buildings, as well as historic commercial districts and residential neighborhoods.

Purpose of the Reform

The reasons underlying this major reform of the tax incentives for rehabilitation of older and historic buildings, originally authorized in the Tax Reform Act of 1976, are described in the Senate Committee on Finance's report accompanying the bill:

The tax incentives for capital formation provided in other sections of this bill might have the unintended and undesirable effect of reducing the relative attractiveness of the existing structures. Investments in new structures and new locations, however, do not necessarily promote economic recovery if they are at the expense of older structures, neighborhoods, and regions. A new structure with new equipment may add little to capital formation or productivity if it simply replaces an existing plant in an older structure in which the

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new equipment could have been installed. Furthermore, the relocation of business can result in substantial hardship for individuals and communities. Since this hardship does not affect the profitability of the business, it may not have been fully taken into account in the decision to relocate, even though it is an economic detriment to the society as a whole.

The increased credit for rehabilitation expenditures is intended to help revitalize the economic prospects of older locations and prevent the decay and deterioration characteristic of distressed economic areas.

Revised Investment Tax Credit for Qualified Rehabilitation

The new ITC for qualified rehabilitation, effective January 1, 1982, is as follows: 15 percent for structures at least 30 years old, 20 percent for structures at least 40 years old and 25 percent for certified historic structures. No ITC is allowed for rehabilitation of a building, other than a certified historic structure, less than 30 years old. A qualified rehabilitation means any building that has been substantially rehabilitated, that was in use prior to beginning the rehabilitation and that retains at least 75 percent of the existing external walls.

An ITC may be deducted from the amount of taxes owed, in contrast to a deduction, which merely reduces a taxpayer's income subject to taxation.

Eligible Categories of Rehabilitation

The 25 percent credit for certified historic rehabilitation is available to both depreciable nonresidential and residential buildings. However, the 15 and 20 percent credits are limited, as under present law, to nonresidential industrial and commercial buildings used for income-producing purposes. Thus, Congress has included a significant incentive for the creation of rental housing in historic buildings.

A certified historic building owned and occupied in part by a taxpayer will qualify for the credit, on a pro-rata basis, for that portion of the building that is income-producing.

Substantial Rehabilitation Test

The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 allows the ITC only if there has been a substantial rehabilitation of a building. This means that the rehabilitation expenditures must exceed the greater of either the taxpayer's adjusted basis in the property (cost of the building plus capital improvements, less depreciation) or \$5,000 within a 24-month period.

The act provides an alternative 60-month period to meet the substantial rehabilitation test in the case of any rehabilitation that

may reasonably be expected to be completed in phases set forth in architectural plans completed before the rehabilitation begins. This restrictive substantial rehabilitation test will disqualify a substantial number of the projects now being certified under the preservation tax incentives, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Adjustment to Basis Rule

Only a certified rehabilitation of a historic structure qualifies to depreciate the full amount of rehabilitation expenditures because certified historic structures are exempt from the adjustment to basis rule. This rule requires that the tax credit be subtracted from the total rehabilitation costs in computing the amount to be depreciated. For example, in the case of a \$100,000 rehabilitation of a 40-year-old building, the 20 percent ITC of \$20,000 can be deducted from taxes owed, but only the remainder, \$80,000, can be depreciated.

In the case of a \$100,000 certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure, the 25 percent ITC of \$25,000 can be deducted from taxes owed, and the entire \$100,000 can be depreciated.

This adjustment to basis rule is designed to favor certified historic rehabilitations. When coupled with the additional 5 percent credit, the margin of tax savings for certified rehabilitation of historic properties is substantial.

Who May Take the ITC

The ITC may be taken by the owner or owners of an eligible building when expenditures are incurred on a qualified rehabilitation. The act further amends current investment credit limitations so that the owner of a rehabilitated building leased and used by a tax-exempt organization or governmental unit is allowed the ITC. This provision was made effective retroactive to July 30, 1980. In addition, a lessee is eligible for the ITC for qualified rehabilitation expenditures incurred by the lessee if, on the date the rehabilitation is completed, the remaining term of the lease is at least 15 years.

Which Buildings Qualify as Historic

As under existing law, a building may be certified by the Secretary of the Interior as historic if (1) it is listed in the National Register of Historic Places or (2) it is located in a registered historic district and the secretary certifies that the building is of historic significance to the district. A registered historic district is one listed in the National Register of Historic Places or one designated by a state or local government under a statute certified by the secretary, in which case the secretary must also certify the district itself.

To qualify for the 25 percent ITC and to assure consistent standards of quality of rehabilitation of certified historic structures, the

rehabilitation must be certified by the secretary as being consistent with the historic character of the building or the district in which the building is located. Thus, the act creates a presumption that a building within a district is historic, and any rehabilitation must be certified to qualify for the ITC. On the other hand, if a building is not of historic significance to a district, it can be certified as such by the secretary to avoid these limitations and qualify for the lesser tax credits.

The existing certification process, administered for the Secretary of the Interior by the National Park Service in cooperation with the state historic preservation officers, will be used to identify eligible buildings and qualify their rehabilitations for the new ITC.

Changes to Existing Preservation Tax Incentives

In an effort to simplify the tax law and to improve the incentives for rehabilitation, the act repeals the current preservation tax incentives and replaces them, effective January 1, 1982, with the new 25 percent ITC. In addition to repealing the 10 percent ITC, the act repealed the following provisions:

60-month amortization of certified historic rehabilitation expenditures (Internal Revenue Code §191)

accelerated depreciation of substantially rehabilitated certified historic structures (Code §167(o)); and

denial of accelerated depreciation for a building constructed or reconstructed on the site of a demolished or substantially altered certified historic structure (Code §167(n)).

The rule in §280B of the Internal Revenue Code, requiring demolition costs to be capitalized as part of the cost of the land rather than deducted, is retained.

Tax Preferences and Recapture

Repeal of Internal Revenue Code §§167(o) and 191 removed tax incentives for historic structures from the category of tax preferences. Under the old law, the 60-month amortization and accelerated depreciation incentives were treated as items of tax preference, thereby subjecting the taxpayer to a minimum tax of 15 percent on these items, often in addition to the taxpayer's regular liability. Because neither the ITC nor the straight-line method of depreciation are classified as items of tax preference, taxpayers investing in qualified rehabilitations are no longer subject to the minimum tax penalty.

Repeal of these sections also substantially alleviated the recapture problems previously associated with the historic preservation tax

incentives. Under the recapture rules applicable to early disposition of real estate prior to passage of the act, depreciation in excess of that which would have been allowable under the straight-line method (depreciation computed in equal amounts over the recovery period) was subject to recapture--that is, to being taxed as income to the taxpayer in the year of disposal.

The availability of an ITC for qualified rehabilitations, if taken with straight-line depreciation, eliminates the recapture problem associated with the historic preservation tax incentives under the old law. However, premature disposal of a qualified rehabilitated building may still result in recapture of a portion of the ITC.

Generally, if a qualified rehabilitated building is held by the taxpayer for longer than five years after the rehabilitation is completed and the building is placed in service, there is no recapture of the ITC. If the property is disposed of after a holding period of less than one year after it is placed in service, 100 percent of the ITC is recaptured. For properties held between one and five years, the ITC recapture amount is reduced by 20 percent per year as follows:

<u>Years Held</u>	<u>Percentage of Recapture</u>
less than 1 year	100
2 years	80
2-3 years	60
3-4 years	40
4-5 years	20
5 or more years	0

Impact on Projects in Process

Generally, the act applies to all expenditures incurred after December 31, 1981. A transition rule, however, permits projects on which the physical work began before January 1, 1982, to use a combination of the old and new law. Consequently, if qualified historic rehabilitation expenditures are incurred before and after January 1, 1982, prior expenditures can qualify for the present 10 percent ITC (plus accelerated depreciation) or 60-month amortization. Expenditures incurred on or after January 1, 1982, will continue to be treated under the old law unless the rehabilitation meets the new law's substantial rehabilitation test. If the test is met, the new law applies, and the 25 percent ITC is the only tax incentive option. Rehabilitation work on 20 to 30-year-old buildings begun before January 1, 1982, may continue to qualify under the provisions of the old law until completion if the rehabilitation would have qualified under the old law.

Depreciation under the Accelerated Cost Recovery System

Under the new accelerated cost recovery system added by the act (effective retroactive to January 1, 1981), the present system of depreciation over a building's useful life is replaced by a system permitting recovery of capital costs, using straight-line or accelerated methods, over predetermined recovery periods. Eligible real property is assigned a 15-year recovery period, but taxpayers may elect a 35 or 45-year extended recovery period.

The methods of cost recovery and recovery periods are the same for both new and used property. Therefore, Congress has eliminated from the Internal Revenue Code the long-standing bias in favor of new construction. In recognition of the economic and social advantages of rehabilitation, there is now a clear incentive for qualified rehabilitations.

The ITC is allowable only if a taxpayer elects to use the straight-line method of depreciation with respect to qualified rehabilitation expenditures. If a taxpayer elects to use an accelerated form of depreciation (175 percent declining balance method for all but low-income housing, which qualifies for 200 percent declining balance method), the taxpayer cannot qualify for an otherwise allowable ITC for qualified rehabilitation expenditures. Composite depreciation is required if an accelerated method of depreciation is elected.

Comparative Advantage of Certified Historic Rehabilitations

The act reflects a definite intent of Congress and the Reagan administration to encourage reinvestment in America's historic buildings, commercial districts and neighborhoods. The 25 percent ITC for certified historic structures is the most beneficial tax treatment available for real estate investment under the amended Internal Revenue Code. The margin of incentive for certified historic structures over other rehabilitations is substantial because of the additional 5 percent credit and the exemption of historic structures from the adjustment to basis rule.

Generally, the ITC allowed for rehabilitations is more beneficial in terms of immediate tax savings than any form of accelerated or straight-line depreciation. Further, because only straight-line depreciation may be taken with the ITC for qualified rehabilitation expenditures, disposition of a qualified rehabilitated building for which the ITC has been taken does not trigger, with respect to the rehabilitation expenditures, the recapture rules related to accelerated depreciation. Because there is no accelerated depreciation, there is no tax preference income subject to the Code's minimum tax rules.

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Thomas A. Coughlin III, assistant general counsel, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

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